

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 5-8, 13, 16-17 and 20-24 will remain pending in the above-identified application and stand ready for further action on the merits.

The amendments made herein to the claims do not incorporate new matter into the application as originally filed. In this regard, claims 16-17 and 21-24 have been amended to properly spell the word "mole". Accordingly, entry of the instant amendment is respectfully requested.

Request for Interview with Examiner

The undersigned request that the Examiner grant an interview in the matter of this case, should the present response not result in an allowance of each of the pending claims.

It is believed that such a personal interview would be helpful in solidify all remaining issues prior to appeal, and/or in helping to determine if any allowable subject matter exists in the claims, prior to appeal to the US Patent Office Board of Patent Appeals.

Incorporation of Earlier Remarks

The Examiner has previously maintained certain prior art rejections from an earlier Office Action. In this respect, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider remarks set forth

in Applicants earlier responses of December 15, 2003 (at page 8, line 1 to page 9, line 7), February 5, 2002 (at page 7, line 1 to page 18, line 1) and November 26, 2002 (at page 6, line 15 to page 9, line 22), since such remarks clearly provide supporting evidence that the instantly claimed methods, detergent granules and compositions are in no way rendered obvious or anticipated by the cited Barletta, et al. (US 4,919,847) and Tadsen, et al. (US 5,527,489) references of record, or the newly cited reference of Otrhalek, et al. (US 3,425,948).

Claim Objections

Each of Claims 16-17 and 21-24 have been objected to as containing an incorrect spelling of the scientific term "mole". Each of the objected to claims have been amended herein to correctly spell the noted term, so that withdraw of the claim objection is required at present.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 5-8, 13, 16-17 and 20-24 have been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as obvious over Barletta et al. (US 4,919,847). Further, claims 5-6, 8, 13, 16-17 and 20-24 have been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tadsen et al. (US 5,527,489). Still further, claims 5-6, 8, 13, 16-17 and 20-24 have

been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Otrhalek et al. (US 3,425,948). Reconsideration and withdrawal of each of these rejections is respectfully requested based upon the arguments of Applicants' prior responses of December 15, 2003, February 5, 2002, and November 26, 2002, which are incorporated herein by reference (as noted above).

Distinctions Over Barletta et al. and Tadsen et al.

Upon considering the earlier filed remarks incorporated herein by reference, the USPTO Examiner will understand that neither of the earlier cited art references of Barletta et al. nor Tadsen et al. teaches, utilizes or otherwise provides for detergent granules and detergent compositions produced utilizing the method as instantly claimed, and provide no motivation to arrive at the same. Absent such teachings and motivation in the cited art, the outstanding rejections under 35 USC §§ 102 and 103 that are based upon Barletta et al. and Tadsen et al. cannot be sustained.

Distinctions Over Otrhalek et al.

First, in the sentence bridging pages 6-7 of the outstanding office action the US Patent Office acknowledges that "Otrhalek, however, fails to specifically disclose the molar ratio of sulfuric

acid to alkylbenzene sulfonic acid as those recited [in the present claims] and the bulk density of the resulting composition."

Second, a distinguishing and characteristic feature of the instantly claimed invention is that (i) sulfuric acid is added to the starting material components in a specific proportion and that (2) the amount of sulfuric acid pre-existing in the liquid acid precursor is 0.09 mole or less per mole of said liquid acid precursor. This is reflected in Example 1 on page 51, lines 6-9 of the application, which states that the liquid acid precursor (LAS) contains 0.05 mole of sulfuric acid per mole of LAS as a result of the LAS manufacturing process. As a technical feature maintaining such a low level of inorganic acid (sulfuric acid) in the liquid acid precursor results in an advantageous property. This is reflected in disclosure at page 13, lines 16-25 of the application, wherein it is explained that by maintaining the amount of the inorganic acid pre-existing in the liquid acid precursor of the non-soap, anionic surfactant at a level of 0.09 mol or less allows one to accomplish an appropriate color for resulting detergent granules (and thereby also compositions containing the granules), with respect to the outer appearance of a desirable detergent product.

Notably, the Otrhalek et al. references being relied upon by the Examiner does not teach, disclose or motivate one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize in any way a liquid acid precursor (LAS) containing such a low amount of inorganic acid, or teach, disclose or otherwise render obvious that by utilizing such a liquid acid precursor (LAS) there can be advantageously and desirably obtained the accomplishment of appropriate color for resulting detergent granules, thereby contributing to the outer appearance of a desired detergent product.

Accordingly, based on the above considerations, it is clear that the instant invention as claimed is completely non-obvious over the cited art reference of Otrhalek, et al.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the amendments and remarks presented herein, the Examiner is respectfully requested to issue a Notice of Allowance indicating that each of the pending claims 5-8, 13, 16-17 and 20-24 is allowable under the provisions of Title 35 of the United States Code.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John W. Bailey (Reg. No. 32,881) at the

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telephone number below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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